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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 78

49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009

INTRODUCED BY

William "Bill" R. Rehm

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO COLLABORATE WITH THE NEW MEXICO ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES AND THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO HOSPITAL TO STUDY THE FUNDING OF INDIGENT CARE AT THE HOSPITAL.

WHEREAS, the university of New Mexico health sciences center has policies that ensure that indigent patients have access to resources to cover the cost of their care at the university of New Mexico hospital, regardless of their place of residence; and

WHEREAS, the total cost of uncompensated care at the hospital rose from more than one hundred thirty-seven million dollars (\$137,000,000) in fiscal year 2006 to more than one hundred sixty-one million dollars (\$161,000,000) in fiscal year 2008; and

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1 WHEREAS, in 2008, according to the higher education
2 department, more than fourteen million dollars (\$14,000,000)
3 worth of uncompensated care at the hospital was provided to
4 patients residing outside of Bernalillo county; and

5 WHEREAS, revenues to offset the cost of uncompensated care
6 at the university of New Mexico hospital come from a variety of
7 sources, including a Bernalillo county hospital mill levy, the
8 county-supported medicaid fund, indigent funds funded by gross
9 receipts taxes, appropriated out-of-county indigent funding and
10 charity, but these combined revenues are insufficient to cover
11 the costs of uncompensated care; and

12 WHEREAS, property taxes in the form of a mill levy from
13 the residents of Bernalillo county funded an estimated eighty-
14 three million eight hundred thousand dollars (\$83,800,000) in
15 uncompensated care in fiscal year 2008; and

16 WHEREAS, the New Mexico health policy commission has
17 acknowledged that residents of Bernalillo county effectively
18 subsidize care for indigent patients from other counties
19 throughout the state; and

20 WHEREAS, according to the Kaiser family foundation,
21 twenty-three percent of New Mexico residents are uninsured,
22 compared to a national rate of fifteen percent uninsured; and

23 WHEREAS, as the economic condition of the state and the
24 nation continues to deteriorate, the number of people who are
25 uninsured will predictably rise; and

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1 WHEREAS, the burden on residents of Bernalillo county and
2 the rest of the state of uncompensated care can likewise be
3 predicted to increase, given historical experience and the
4 current economic downturn; and

5 WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the state to ensure
6 access to needed hospital services for all residents of the
7 state;

8 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
9 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the human services department be
10 requested to collaborate with the New Mexico association of
11 counties and the university of New Mexico hospital to study the
12 funding of indigent care at the university of New Mexico
13 hospital; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study explore alternative
15 funding mechanisms that will reduce the burden on Bernalillo
16 county taxpayers while retaining access to services at the
17 university of New Mexico hospital for all New Mexico residents;
18 and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the human services department
20 consult with the higher education department, the university of
21 New Mexico health sciences center and others, as appropriate,
22 in conducting the study; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a report of the findings and
24 recommendations of the study be presented to the interim
25 legislative health and human services committee and the

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1 legislative finance committee by October 1, 2009; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
3 transmitted to the human services department, the New Mexico
4 association of counties and the university of New Mexico
5 hospital.

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